

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP DEVELOPMENT

THE BASIC NECESSITIES FOR PARENTS

Below is a list of ten parental actions that have a direct impact on a child's health and safety. When these actions are consistently demonstrated by parents, their children are more likely to be safe and less likely to be susceptible to the emotional grooming of a predator.

#10 NETWORK WITH FAMILIES

Involvement in a community that has shared beliefs and practices increases a child's sense of security, safety and happiness. The most common community that a family can participate in is the parish family.

Building Strong Families, 2003

#9 LIMIT TIME ALONE ON THE INTERNET

Youth who are allowed to access the internet without supervision or in privacy of their bedroom are likely targets for internet predators. Research shows that the perfect victim is between the ages of 11-14, has little to know parental involvement, has no set bedtime, can leave the home as they please, and has a computer in their bedroom.

Crimes Against Children Resource Center 2006

#8 SET STANDARDS AND LISTEN, BE THE AUTHORITY

Every person in your family should know what is and isn't acceptable when it comes to things like curfew, alcohol and drugs, driving, boundaries, money, physical self-control, media and parental involvement. Developing a set of standards with your child and then enforcing them keeps your child safe, secure and successful.

Child Trends, 2002

#7 MONITOR MEDIA - YOURS AND THEIRS

What a youth watches or listens to does influence their perception of what is and isn't acceptable. Youth who watch/access visual or audio programs that are sexually explicit or where sexual activity is implied are at a greater risk of treating sexual intimacy as something commonplace. Another concern is pornography: parents must be vigilant on internet usage for EVERY member of the family.

Pediatrics, 2004

#6 PAY ATTENTION

The best way to recognize grooming behavior is to pay attention to your child and the people in your child's life. Remember that children require the protection of adults, usually from adults. Their fear of people is not yet developed, their intuition not yet loaded with enough information and experience to keep them from harm. There are many demands placed upon a parent's time, but nothing—nothing—is more important than the welfare of our children. When we blindly surrender responsibility for them to others without question, we invite trouble. Parents should know their child's teachers, coaches, day care providers, youth group leaders, and other significant adults in their lives. Make unannounced visits. Ask questions. Stay involved.

Assistant Attorney General for the State of Wisconsin, 2009

#5 PROTECT NOT SMOTHER

Overparenting a child is a disadvantage. The consequences of extreme protection of a child vary from social anxiety to immaturity, to the inability to cope, to a self concept of fragility, to an extension of adolescence. The best route for parents to take is to become the guide at the child's side rather than the sage on the child's stage. Children need to feel that they have control over their lives.

Nation of Wimps, 2004

#4 CONNECT

Time with your child is necessary because predators find and fill voids in a child's life. The number one point of connection happens at the dinner table. Beyond that play, listen, spend time doing nothing, laugh together, watch a movie, coach their team, be a room parent, attend parent-teacher conferences, snuggle, eat families meals together regularly, go for a drive, have a conversation about anything...**MAKE TIME FOR YOUR CHILD EACH AND EVERY DAY.**

Hardwired to Connect, 2003

#3 TALK WITH YOUR CHILDREN

Teach them to recognize grooming behavior. Teach them to be wary of any physical contact initiated by an adult. And teach them to trust you with their problems and their pain. The safest child is the child who knows he can bring his problems and concerns to parents and adult caregivers without reproach or retaliation.

Assistant Attorney General for the State of Wisconsin, 2009

#2 SET THE EXAMPLE

You are your child's primary educator. No matter what you do, your children are watching and following your lead. If you want your children to take safety seriously, be safety conscious. If you want your children to respect sexuality, practice chastity. If you want your children to love God, show them how.

Ad Health Study, 2002

#1 PRAY, RECEIVE THE SACRAMENTS

Those who practice their faith become happy and healthy adults. Why? It seems that when youth know they have a connection with God, they are better equipped to answer the age old questions, "Who am I and Why do I exist?" According to research, religious youth have lower mental illness, stress and emotional problems. They are less likely to engage in negative risk behaviors. They have a strong self-image and self-respect. They are less likely to be susceptible to emotional grooming which may lead to victimization. They are safer drivers! They have an increased respect for their parent's authority and are more helpful. What more do you want?!

National Study of Youth and Religion, 2002

Do not conform yourselves to this age, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, so that you may judge what is God's will, what is good, pleasing and perfect.

Romans 12:2